Here are some examples of how the way you say things can ruin your relationship:

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| #1 Right | #2 Wrong | Reason |
| I’m choosing to not go to clubs because it makes my wife unhappy/nervous | My wife won’t let me go to clubs | #2 blames your wife and assumes you don’t have control. #1 takes personal responsibility that you can choose to be in a relationship with someone who doesn’t want you to go clubbing or you can choose to leave the relationship. |
| Hey honey, I’m taking the kids to the movies with my mom. Do you want to come along or stay home and have alone time. | I’m taking the kids to the movies with my mom. You can come or not | #1 can make your partner feel supported and that you want to include them, however you also want them to take care of themselves by having some alone time. #2 is more abrupt and doesn’t give the same loving message. |
| I’m sorry that I forgot to take out the trash. I know it means a lot to you that we don’t have a smelly kitchen with an overflowing trash. I will set my alert on my phone for next week on trash day so I don’t forget. | I’m sorry that I forgot to take out the trash, but I’ve been working all day and didn’t have time home like you did today, must be nice. | #1 takes personal responsibility. You have agreed to take out the trash as your chore. If you think the chores are uneven, then talk about it at a time that the chores aren’t overdue (or not done). Talking about it when you have disappointed your partner does not help your case. #2 is passive aggressive. Ask yourself: what do you think your partner would feel after you said #2. Do they deserve that type of feeling when YOU are the one that made a mistake. |
| Without your child in the room, talk to your partner about what it feels when you are late and what you think it might be like for your child. | (talking to your child) You see how mom was late again, she doesn’t even care about us | Bringing a child into an argument or trying to get your child to take your side is harmful to your child and will ultimately put a wedge between your relationship with them. Do not ever talk about their other parent in a negative way in front of the child. No matter how true you think the statement is. |